

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
TRSE-00 OMB-01 MCT-01 HA-05 /071 W
-----050365 251828Z /72

R 251544Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8121
INFO AMCONSUL IBADAN
AMCONSUL KADUNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 5207

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PEDV, NI
SUBJECT: SHARIA: THE NORTHERNERS RETURN

REF: (A) LAGOS 5002, (B) LAGOS 4919, (C) KADUNA 501

SUMMARY: NORTHERN MCAS HAVE RETURNED TO THE CON-
STITUENT ASSEMBLY; HOWEVER, THE STALEMATE OVER HSARIA CONT-
INUES. END SUMMARY.

1. NORTHERN MCAS WHO HAD WALKED OUT OF THE
CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY (CA) OVER THE SHARIA ISSUED
HAVE RETURNED. NORTHERNERS PARTICIPATED IN
CA SESSIONS MONDAY AND TODAY AS THE ASSEMBLY
CONTINUED ITS CONSIDERATION OF THE FUNDAMENTAL
RIGHTS CHAPTER OF THE DRAFT. ATMOSPHERICS
AMONG MEMBERS IN THE CORRIDORS ARE AFFABLE, IF
SOMEWHAT STRAINED.
2. DESPITE THE NORTHERN RETURN, THE SHARIA ISSUE
REMAINS DEADLOCKED, TRAPPED BETWEEN NORTHERN
PRESSURE AND SOUTHERN INTRANSIGENCE. OVER THE
WEEKEND, CHIEF ROTIMI WILLIAMS DEVELOPED WHAT HE
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FELT WAS A COMPROMISE SOLUTION WHICH WOULD ENTAIL
SETTING UP A SHARIA "DIVISION" OF THE
FEDERAL COURT OF APPEALS. ON MONDAY, WILLIAMS
TABLED THE FOLLOWING MOTION IN THE CA:
"THE PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERAL COURT OF APPEAL
SHALL CONSTITUTE A DIVISION OF TZMAT COURT FOR THE
PURPOSE OF HEARING APPEALS FROM A SHARIA COURT

OF APPEAL OR FROM A CUSTOMARY COURT OF APPEAL AND MAY CONSTITUTE SUCH OTHER DIVISIONS OF THE COURT AS HE MAY CONSIDER NECESSARY OR EXPEDIENT FOR THE DISCHARGE OF ITS FUNCTIONS."

HOWEVER, THE CHIEF WITHDREW HIS MOTION AFTER SOUTHERN MCAS WHO HAD MASSED IN THE LOBBY AND ENTERED THE CHAMBER TOGETHER MADE IT CLEAR THEY WOULD VOTE IT DOWN. THE SESSION WAS REPORTEDLY MARKED BY LOUD PERSONAL INSULTS TO CHIEF WILLIAMS FROM MIDDLE BELT LEADER PAUL UNONGO.

3. COMMENT: IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE HOW THE ISSUE WILL BE RESOLVED. SOUTHERN MCAS REMAIN INTRANSIGENT AND UNWILLING TO REOPEN THE ISSUE. HILARY NJOKU TOLD US TODAY THAT ANY CHANGE OF THE SHARIA'S DECISION WOULD HAVE TO BE DONE UNDEMOCRATICALLY AS A MAJORITY IN THE ASSEMBLY HAS ALREADY DECIDED. NJOKU WOULD NOT "100 PERCENT" EXCLUDE SUCH A POSSIBILITY; HOWEVER, HE SAID IT WOULD HAVE GRAVE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNTRY'S FUTURE. NORTHERN MCAS ARE KEEPING THEIR OWN COUNSEL ON THE ISSUE. FOR EXAMPLE, NORTHERN LEADER ALHAJI SHETTIMA ALI MONGUNO DECLINED TO DISCUSS THE PROBLEM WITH US. WE HAVE HEARD, HOWEVER, THAT NORTHERNERS ARE LOBBYING HARD ON THE ISSUE AT THE SATELLITE VILLAGE. IN THAT
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REGARD, NJOKU SAID THAT THE SOUTHERNERS ARE KEEPING THEIR SUPPORTERS IN TOWN IN CASE THE NORTHERNERS ATTEMPT TO REOPEN THE ISSUE ON SHORT NOTICE. END COMMENT.
WYMAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DISPUTES, CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION, COURTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LAGOS05207
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780176-1080
Format: TEL
From: LAGOS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780421/aaaaaqva.tel
Line Count: 99
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 3a0d49a8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 LAGOS 5002, 78 LAGOS 4919, 78 KADUNA 501
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2861367
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SHARIA: THE NORTHERNERS RETURN
TAGS: PGOV, PDEV, PINT, NI, (WILLIAMS, ROTIMI), (UNONGO, PAUL), (NJOKU, HILARY)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/3a0d49a8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014